

MATERNITY SERVICES LIAISON COMMITTEE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

“Your committee, your views”

Perhaps you are pregnant, or you have just had a baby, or maybe you work in maternity services - whoever you are, welcome to the Lothian Maternity Services Liaison Committee 2020 annual report. We have written this for you, to tell you who we are and what we are trying to do and I hope that it will inspire you to join us and get involved in the work we do.

In Lothian, we are lucky to have a well-established MSLC, and yet, not many pregnant women and families know about us. This is something that we want to change. This report is one of the things we are doing to reach out to the local community and to show what can be done when you work in partnership.

Our meetings are open and relaxed. As a lay member myself I am very careful to keep our discussions real and close to women's interests. I do all I can to make everybody feel they can contribute equally to all the discussions.

Change is slow in large organisations and this is often frustrating but you will see in the report that we are, little by little, making a difference to women and their families in Lothian. It is important to say that this positive change could not happen without the trust and support the MSLC receives from NHS Lothian and the dedication of the midwives, obstetricians and everyone else looking after women and their babies.

We are keen to welcome new members to the committee. If you have had a baby recently or have an interest in maternity services and would like to be involved, we would love to hear from you.



Mathilde Peace (Lay Chair) February 2021



Maternity Services Liaison Committee Annual Report 2020

Who are we?

- We are a statutory **COMMITTEE**, chaired by a lay member, which brings together the families who use maternity services and the people who work for NHS Lothian maternity services.

We **LISTEN** to what women and their families have to say about the service.

We are the **LINK** between the women and families who use NHS Lothian maternity services and the people who deliver these services.

We **WORK TOGETHER** with NHS Lothian to make changes and improvements where possible.

We sourced Covid-19 information in other languages and formats. This is now on the website and it is also given to the women who need it, at their first appointment.

<https://services.nhslothian.scot/Maternity/TranslatedMaterials>

All the breastfeeding drop-in groups had to move online and this new leaflet provides information on them:

<https://services.nhslothian.scot/feedingyourbaby/Pages/Breastfeeding.aspx>

One-to-one support for breastfeeding mothers in other languages is also advertised on the leaflet and provided by NCT, La Leche League and the Breastfeeding Network.

What did we do in 2020?

- **A Year Like No Other**

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the MSLC meetings were temporarily suspended for a few months. We then moved to online meetings, starting with the MSLC lay members who met in September. They described how the impact of the pandemic on maternity services had changed women's and parents' experiences and discussed the main issues. We made some suggestions to improve information and communication around changes made to services due to Covid-19.

- **Communication around Covid-19**

The MSLC helped set up a new online information point embedded in the Lothian maternity services website.

<https://services.nhslothian.scot/Maternity/covid-19>

NHS Lothian also posts information on changes related to Covid-19 guidelines on Twitter @NHS_Lothian

- **Supporting women to make decisions about their care**

The challenging circumstances of 2020 have shown how critical this is. We want women to know their rights and be informed about what options they have. We are working with midwives and doctors to make sure women are fully involved in all decisions about their care.

We are currently testing a simple card designed to remind women of key questions they can ask when discussing options about their care. You can read more here:

<https://services.nhslothian.scot/Maternity/MSLC/Pages/MSLC-Current-Working-Group.aspx>

- **Developing Online Presence of Maternity Services**

We have been involved in discussions about creating a Facebook / Twitter account for maternity services. This should be developed during 2021.

The website is also currently being updated and the MSLC is taking part in this work.

Ways you can get involved

- **Attend an online meeting**

We have 6 meetings a year. At present all our meetings are held remotely. Find out more on our website. We just need to know you are coming.

<https://services.nhsllothian.scot/Maternity/MSLC/Pages/Meetings.aspx>

- **Tell us about your experience**

Use the feedback page on the MSLC website.

Anyone can send comments and suggestions about Lothian maternity services. These are read by the MSLC lay chair and remain anonymous unless the person sending comments wants a direct and personal response.

<https://services.nhsllothian.scot/Maternity/MSLC/Pages/Feedback.aspx>

- **Join a parents' support association**

The MSLC has established close relationships with a number of women's and parents' support associations. Among these are NCT (National Childbirth Trust), the Pregnancy and Parents Centre, the Breastfeeding Network, La Leche League, Held in our Hearts (Baby loss counselling and support) and JUNO (Perinatal mental health support). The members representing these support groups regularly feedback women's views and alert the MSLC to specific issues arising across the whole service.

Join Lothian Maternity Engagement Group

We have created an online group of recent users of maternity services who will develop and test ideas to improve services. We are currently focusing on induction, postnatal care and breastfeeding support.

Mothers' Voices Events

Invitation to a cafe or community centre near you to talk about maternity services with other parents and NHS Lothian midwives, health visitors and doctors. We are hoping to hold more Mothers' Voices in 2021 - one in West Lothian and one in Edinburgh. This will depend on the evolution of the covid-19 pandemic.



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Mathilde Peace, MSLC Chair

<https://services.nhsllothian.scot/Maternity/MSLC/Pages/default.aspx>



This is what our members are saying:

"I had a difficult pregnancy and being a member of the MSLC has given me the opportunity to give something back to NHS Lothian. It has been great to meet new people and contribute to discussions, innovations and research around maternity services. My favourite part has been feeding back on what it is like to experience care and seeing changes and improvements made as a result of this. I feel like I have made a difference".

"As the NHS Lothian Child Health Commissioner I value the importance of lay knowledge and find the input of the MSLC an invaluable co-production resource in helping professionals to understand the lived experience of our service users."

"As a consultant anaesthetist working in maternity services it is crucial that we have the concerns of the women we care for at the centre of what we do. Having the opportunity to learn of those concerns and work together to bring about change is the great strength of the MSLC. The lay chair of this group has provided skilled leadership to ensure all views are heard in a balanced way and this is a unique strength of the group in my experience."

"My work with the National Childbirth Trust involves working with parents both antenatally and postnatally. New parents are sometimes reluctant to give feedback directly to NHS Lothian regarding their experience of maternity services. However, they frequently share their birth stories with me. They tell me what worked well for them and also, occasionally, where their experiences were not so positive. As a member of the MSLC, I am able to feed these experiences back anonymously to the Committee. This feedback can help direct changes in services / facilities and, as a result, help improve the experience for maternity service users".